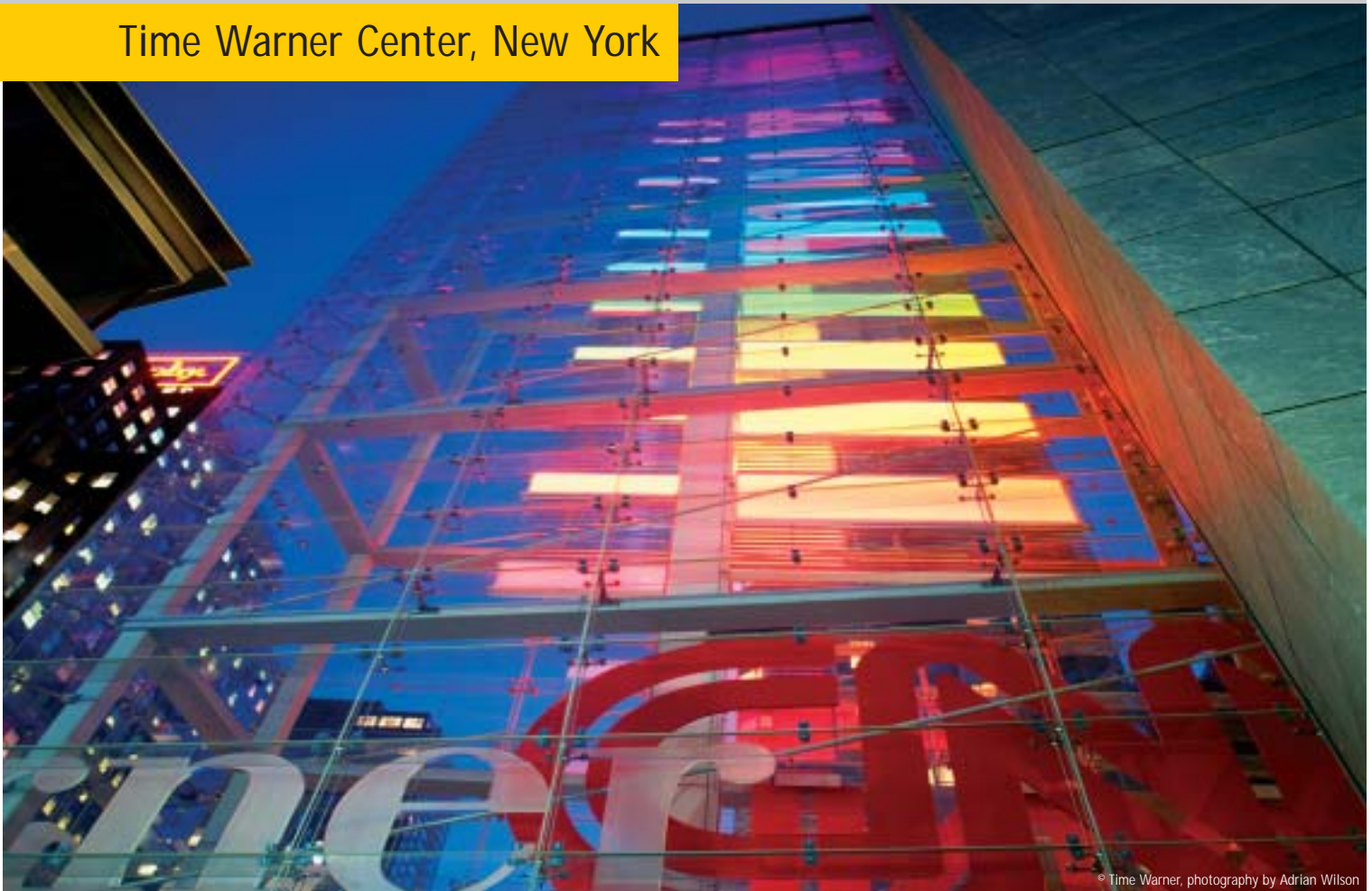


grandMA Case Study

Time Warner Center, New York



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■ grandMA – total control

Time Warner Center

extraordinary
architectural lighting

grandMA multimedia consoles provide unique bitmap effects for the extraordinary architectural lighting of the Time Warner Center in New York



© Time Warner, photography by Adam Wilkoff

With an area of more than 260,000 m², the Time Warner Center in New York is an exclusive workplace for the 1,700 people, including employees of CNN and Turner Broadcasting Sales, working there. Located at Columbus Circle, the building complex extends from 58th to 60th Street on the south-western edge of Central Park and is rightly regarded as a new Manhattan landmark.

Yet the building is far more than a mere place of work, it provides many opportunities for people to communicate, to do some upscale shopping, or recharge their creative batteries or simply relax in the oases of calm provided. The 37-meter-tall glass structure is shaped like a ship's bow and is the outstanding feature of the architectural design, which deliberately strives for an intelligent, smooth and soft-edged style. Consequently, a sculpture that was made of lighting fixtures and would blend in well with this design concept as well as with its surroundings was installed in this part of the Time Warner Center.

The concept

Designer Ted Mather said about the concept: "Time Warner representatives did not want the brightness and glamour of LED installations at Times Square, but to create a sculpture which would be a kind of gateway to Central Park or to the city, depending on which way you are going."

The installation can create different lighting moods, yet it can also serve as a signpost or a clock. On a linear length of 222 meters LED colour changers were installed. These LED fixtures were mounted behind 36 translucent light panels of different sizes. A grandMA full-size console was then used to control the sculpture's lighting programme.

The requirements and the solution

To create particular special effects, programmer Paul Sonnleitner made good use of a feature that is only available on the grandMA consoles: The capability to create bitmap effects via the "layout view", without the need for additional hardware. The programmer sets up a virtual LED or dimmer matrix in the "layout view". Any show file can store 64 individual layouts; the setup of each layout is done in rows and columns. Up to 999 bitmaps can be made available and assigned to any layout. Additional bitmaps can be imported into the grandMA console from a floppy disk. The bitmaps (or scrolling text) can be moved, rotated and resized. At the same time, all lighting fixtures can still be controlled individually and used in the "normal" manner, thus, for example, a cross fade between CMY colour effects and bitmap effects can be achieved.

For the Time Warner Center, bitmaps were created from digital photos taken in Central Park during different seasons. These bitmaps were then loaded into the grandMA console and converted into the appropriate RGB values for the LED colour changers.

Project team

Lighting Design:	Ted Mather
Programming:	Paul Sonnleitner
Consoles & Support:	Bob Gordon CEO A.C.T. Lighting, technical support manager Mario Collazo and Richard Cabrera II
Project Coordination:	Ron Brodeur for Scharff Weisberg Lighting Systems
Time Warner Creative Team:	George H Ladyman JR, Vice President Time Warner
Production Designer:	Brian Web
Producer:	David Rome, RomeAntics Productions Design & Programming
Sculpture Creation	Cinnabar Sculpture Fabrication
Fixtures:	Color Kinetics

"First we initially specified a different console back when the project was in its conception stage, but we couldn't keep that one running long enough without crashing to patch eight universes of LEDs. So we lost confidence and began looking around for alternatives. After doing some research for an appropriate lighting control system, grandMA's track record of stability and reliability as well as the new bitmap effects convinced us using it for this permanent installation", explains Sonnleitner. "The Sculpture is running from 4 until 11 pm in winter and spring, and from 6 pm until 12 midnight in summer and fall every day of the year. So we were very interested in a rock-solid solution. There is no lighting console out there currently that deals with LEDs as well as grandMA. The virtual intensity channel, used in conjunction with the colour picker, makes manipulating LEDs as simple as any other kind of desk channel.

The networking layer of the console is very well designed. It enables us to change the programming from anywhere in the world, to ftp-transport numerous bitmap files between the programming desk and the playback unit, to keep the file server in the same LAN and also to program wirelessly from a penthouse at the Trump Tower Hotel across the street. The beauty of the bitmap effects is, that programming vast colour changing and intensity changes for two or three minute loops without repeating itself after ten seconds runtime can be done so easy and saves a lot of time, too. For instance: I designed a variety of different layouts, I used one for images to scroll smoothly from top to bottom and several other for random applications of colour, that allowed us to take Ted Mather's conceptual images and quickly apply a movement effect and get a non-repeating effect of abstract colour and intensity nearly instantly. It was brilliant."

An additional function of the sculpture – one which is perhaps not immediately and conspicuously obvious - is that of a clock: The larger, pink light panels indicate the hour, with smaller, yellow rectangles indicating five-minute increments.

The sculpture can be streaked horizontally and vertically with colour textures or gradients. For a sky illusion, as an example, the panels would reproduce the blue colour of the sky and the 12 Vari*Lite VL 3000 could be used to project suitable cloud gobos onto the panels. The LED panels can be used in still different ways: Mather even used a Kandinsky painting as inspiration for one of the sculpture's lighting designs.



Bitmap Effects from the Original Showfile



Luminous and Transparent

Company Profile

■ Since its foundation in 1983, MA Lighting has grown to become one of the leading international manufacturers of computer-controlled light consoles, networking components and digital dimming systems. MA Lighting has established new benchmarks for performance and capacity with integrated system solutions and the grandMA product family.

The industry leading position of MA Lighting rests on two columns – MA Lighting Technology in Waldbuettelbrunn as the centre for production, research and development and MA Lighting International in Paderborn for marketing, distribution and technical support. A global service network provides fast customer service, and professional sales partners are ready to help users with advice and hands-on support when needed.



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All technical specifications are subject to change without notification.

We do not assume liability for any incorrect information in this case study.